

Tribal Alliances

Chap. III

619 wander into the lands of a hostile tribe, so it has to keep up alliances
221 with tribes who are on good terms and will allow it to graze over their
dirahs when forced to do so. Hence it follows that groups or confeder-
ations of tribes are formed, friendly to each other and hostile to other
similar groups. These groups, with their corresponding alliances, are
often of century-old standing and serve a most useful purpose. They
have, moreover, stood the test of war, drought and trouble. Examples
of such groups are given below, and all Arabia may be said to be
parcelled up into similar protective alliances.

- (a) Harb—Mutair (Ilwa)—'Ajman tribes.
- (b) Bani 'Abdilla (Mutair)—'Utaiba.
- (c) Dhafir—Shammar and 'Awazim.
- (d) 'Ajman—Murra—Najran tribes (a blood federation).*
- (e) The various 'Anizah groups of the north, such as Dahamsha,
Fida'an Amarat, Ruwala, Sba'a and Zana Muslim.

619 When the Central Government is strong, like the present Sa'udi
regime, then tribes are made to keep the peace and behave themselves,

701 * The 'Ajman claim to be able to turn out over 10,000 fighting men is obviously
exaggerated. Their full fighting strength is probably about 8,000. They once claimed
to be able to muster 2,000 mounted men, but that is not so to-day.

726 The 'Ajman have several *nakhwas* or war cries, of which the three commonest are—
"Garis al hadid wa ana ibn al 'Ajām", "Sāfi al maui wa ana lathāleh" and "Sufar sāfi
al maui wa ana lathāleh"—meaning "Cutter of iron, and I am the son of the 'Ajman",
"Death cleared all and I still survive" and "Death is whistling and I am still surviving".

The 'Ajman tribe when about to join battle have a custom of tying up their side locks
(*quram*) over their heads in a tall knot, which they bind round with a red cloth. They
call the head-effect thus caused "Al Ganaza".

619 The 'Ajman, whom some authorities would connect, and I think rightly, with the
[173] Qahtan, state that they are descended from the Shurafa of Najran, and claim with the
Murra to have one ancestor, Yām. They certainly look upon the Murra as their blood
brothers and each will help the other always. Should either the Murra or 'Ajman desire
the help of the other against a common enemy, it is customary to send a messenger to
the other tribe on a camel with a red scarf or scarlet rope bound round its neck. The
messenger cries aloud to those he wants to rouse the words '*Aydl Marzūki*', the sacred
call of the descendants of Yām, and all know what the signal means—even if 'Ajman
and Murra were themselves fighting against each other, a not uncommon occurrence,
they would at once fraternise and combine against the common foe.—(Authority
Shaikh Fuhaid al Fahad al Hithlain 30.6.38). Their tribal strength and undoubted war
prowess makes their alliance valuable and their enmity a serious danger; but in politics
they are a shifting and inconsistent factor, being as they themselves have been known
openly to profess, "the friends of those who treat them best".

175 During the Ottoman occupation of Hassa and Qatif, the 'Ajman were constantly
recalcitrant, in spite of subsidies doled out to their shaihs, and they inflicted several
serious defeats on the army of occupation.

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Iraq MH1

The Muntafiq and the Turks

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but strong numerically, and stronger still in their hereditary hold upon the land they occupy.

The Muntafiq league under the Sa'adun remained until the time of Mid-hat Pasha, in 1871, almost independent of Turkish rule. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, however, they seem to have paid tribute to the Turks. The first mention of this tribute is in 1747, when the Resident at Basra reported that the Muntafiq were in rebellion against the Turks because of the tribute imposed on them. In 1769 they again rebelled under their shaikh 'Abdullah on account of arrears of the tribute which the Turks had attempted to exact. In 1776 the Muntafiq helped the Turks to defend Basra against the Persians under Karim Khan, but were defeated and presumably submitted to the Persians during the three years of the Persian occupation, which ended in 1779. In May 1787 the Sa'adun Shaikh Thuwaini entered Basra with a large force, took possession of the town and the Turkish fleet and imprisoned the Musallim, but was expelled from Basra by the Pasha of Baghdad in October 1787.

Between 1797 and 1802 the Muntafiq formed the chief bulwark of Basra against the Wahhabis. In 1798 they marched with the Turks into Hasa against the Wahhabis, and in 1801 the Shaikh Thuwaini, already mentioned, led an expedition against the Wahhabi capital, but was murdered not far from Kuwait.

Between 1810 and 1817 the Muntafiq seem to have been in open rebellion against the Pasha of Baghdad. In 1813 'Abdullah Pasha of Baghdad marched against the Muntafiq chief, Humud al Thamir, but was defeated near Basra, captured and put to death. Upon this the Sa'adun greatly extended their power and ruled up to Samawah. Da'ud Pasha of Baghdad attempted about 1817 to break up the tribe by nominating a rival chief in opposition to Humud, but the intrigue failed, and after the deposition of Da'ud Pasha in 1831 Humud's son, Majid, regained the old independence and ascendancy of the Sa'adun. In 1850 the Muntafiq districts were torn by feuds in which the Turks feebly interfered, Faris ibn 'Ajil being finally recognised as the principal chief.

From this time onward the Turks began getting a firmer hold over the Muntafiq by constantly changing the shaikhs and setting them one against the other, increasing on the occasion of each change the tribute

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175 payable by the tribe. Thus between 1851 and 1853 the nominal tribute
619 was increased from 200,000 to 310,000 *Shamis*, and the regular system of farming out the country by auction to the shaikhs seems to have begun. In 1863 the Wali of Baghdad, Namiq Pasha, attempted to break the tribal power by taking away altogether the Muntafiq lands south of Qurnah, together with the Hai lands, and turning the Sa'adan chief into a regular Qaimmaqam whose powers were to be much diminished and restricted to Suq al Shuyukh. A Turkish Muhasibju was put in to rule the country with him. The chief, Shaikh Mansur, rebelled against these restrictions and tried to engineer a general Arab rising against the Turks, on the express ground that the Turks were attempting to interfere in the internal administration of the tribes. The Wali was forced to withdraw from his new policy, but it was noted by the Resident at Baghdad that, if the Turks had had the strength and perseverance to carry it out, it would have been approved by the Muntafiq tribes, who had suffered much oppression at the hands of their chiefs.

In 1864 and 1865 the two principal chiefs, Shaikh Fahad and Shaikh Mansur, were still in a state of veiled rebellion against the Turks, owing to the attempts of the latter to break up the tribal system. Shaikh Mansur finally took refuge with the Dhafir, while his brother, Nasir, was in 1866 granted the lease of the Shaikship, having outbid Shaikh Fahad. Shaikh Nasir was received into special favour by the Turks and he seems to have fallen under the influence of the Great Wali of Baghdad, Mid-hat Pasha, who about 1871 induced him to abandon the position taken up by Shaikh Fahad and Shaikh Mansur, and to welcome Ottomanising influences among the Muntafiq. This was the first downward step, and Nasir Pasha, great as his name is (he founded Nasiriyah), seems really to have been the betrayer of the Muntafiq to the Turks. An attempt at a regular Turkish land settlement was made. The Sa'adun were bribed into accepting the change, by being converted into regular landowners from their position as tribute-receiving chiefs. The tribes lost their status as landowners and became tenants, and the whole of the arable land of Nasiriyah and Suq al Shuyukh was parcelled out, by Tapu registration, then for the first time introduced, between the Sa'adun and the Turkish Crown.

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Muntafiq Rebellion

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In 1872 Shaikh Nasir was employed by the Turks in settling the newly conquered districts of Hasa and Qatif, and as a reward for these services he was appointed Wali of the newly constituted Wilayat of Basra in 1875. He proved too powerful, however, owing to the conjunction of the Waliship with the Chiefship of the Muntafiq, and was exiled to Constantinople about 1877.

In 1881, while Nasir was a prisoner in Constantinople, the whole of the Muntafiq tribes rose in rebellion, partly it seems owing to collisions between them and the Turkish troops stationed at the newly built cantonment of Nasiriyah, and partly because attempts were being made by the Turks to enforce the new land settlement and to make the tribesmen pay landlord's dues to the Turkish Crown and to the Sa'adun. This rebellion was never properly put down, but the Turks seem to have given up collecting the new land taxes and to have given considerable power to Falih Pasha, eldest son of the deported Nasir, who thereupon resumed to some extent the Ottomanising policy of his father.

In the meantime the Muntafiq became divided in allegiance between Sa'adun Pasha, son of Shaikh Mansur (who was thus nephew of Nasir and first cousin of Falih), and Falih himself. Apparently at the time Falih was regarded as the Ottomaniser and Sa'adun as the exponent of the old tribal principles. Sa'adun Pasha, in consequence of his hostility to Turkish influence, was at this time a friend of the Shaikh of Kuwait. He maintained himself against Falih mainly by plunder and robbery. He first came into prominence in 1900 when he raided Ibn Rashid in order to please the Shaikh of Kuwait. Ibn Rashid threatened reprisals on Kuwait, and marched to attack Kuwait territory. He was confronted by the forces of Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait and of Sa'adun Pasha, with some Turkish troops, and was finally persuaded to withdraw, on the promise that Sa'adun Pasha would be hunted down.

Sa'adun Pasha thought that he had been deserted by Mubarak in the course of these negotiations and he and Mubarak seem never to have been on good terms again. In 1903 he caused a great disturbance among the Muntafiq by practising extortion on the Jazirah tribes, presumably those which owed allegiance to Shaikh Falih. A small Turkish force was sent against him and was massacred by him with

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619 its Colonel at Shatrah, but in 1904 he was taken back into favour of the Turks.

Between 1904 and 1908 the Muntafiq continued to divide their allegiance between the two cousins, Sa'adun Pasha and Falih. In the spring of 1908 Falih died, leaving no son of any age or force of character to succeed him, so that Sa'adun became clearly predominant in the tribe. In 1908 Sa'adun seized the opportunity of the revolution and came out as a strong supporter of the Committee of Union and Progress. He was therefore favoured by the officials, while Falih's family was thrust into the shade. Sa'adun's championing of the cause of the Committee gradually brought him into conflict with Saiyid Talib of Basra who, after flirting with the party of Union and Progress, had begun to promote the opposing Arab movement. Confident in the support of the Union and Progress officials, Sa'adun Pasha began to exercise great tyranny among the Muntafiq; he put many of the minor shaikhs to death,* and extended more and more his system of blackmail and extortion. Finally in 1910 Názim Pasha, Wali of Baghdad, adopted the policy of governing the whole of the Muntafiq country through Sa'adun Pasha, whom he practically appointed Mutasarrif of Nasiriyah. He supported him unreservedly and would listen to no complaints against him. Great discontent against Sa'adun Pasha, fomented by the party of the sons of Falih Pasha, developed among the tribesmen who, in March 1911, took advantage of his defeat in an expedition against the Dhafr to rise against him. The whole country was in an uproar, and in June 1911 a Turkish Commission was appointed to enquire into the cause of the rising. It appeared that one of the main causes was that Sa'adun Pasha, acting as a Turkish official, had attempted to carry out the Turkish policy of disarmament among his own tribesmen. This had naturally made him intensely unpopular. The Commission, however, was understood to "attribute the Muntafiq troubles to the fact that the arable lands of the tribe are in the hands of a few powerful shaikhs, who oppress their fellow-tribesmen and keep them at variance, and that the proper remedy is a thoroughgoing partition of the lands". This was a rare instance of penetration on the part of a Turkish Committee of Enquiry,

* Notably five Budur tribal shaikhs near Batha above Nasiriyah Town, under very treacherous circumstances.

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Rival Chieftains

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and there is little doubt that they had hit the right nail on the head. 175
At the bottom of all the Muntafiq troubles is an agrarian difficulty, such 619
as has stirred men's minds from the time of Tiberius Gracchus to the
time of the Irish Land League.

Sa'adun Pasha with his son, 'Ajaimi, had been seeking to maintain himself in the neighbourhood of Nasiriyah against his rebellious tribesmen. But on the assembling of the Committee of Enquiry, the Turks withdrew all official support from him, and, entirely reversing their policy, sought to enter into direct relations with the tribesman and to prepare the way for an individualistic regime and for the last step in the smashing of the tribal system. Saiyid Talib, Naqibzadah of Basra, who had not yet appeared in open opposition to the Committee of Union and Progress, nor openly espoused the side of the Falih family against Sa'adun, was sent by the Turks to try and get hold of Sa'adun Pasha. He managed to decoy him on board the gunboat *Marmaris* near Suq al Shuyukh and immediately took him off in confinement to Basra and handed him over to the Wali, leaving 'Ajaimi and Sa'adun's other sons at large. This act of treachery on the part of Saiyid Talib was never forgiven by 'Ajaimi and threw him permanently on to the side of the Committee of Union and Progress and against the side of the Arab Party under Saiyid Talib, in spite of the mean way in which Sa'adun Pasha had been treated by Turkish officialdom.

In July 1911 Sa'adun Pasha was sent in confinement to Baghdad and was thence removed in August 1911 to Aleppo, where he died suddenly on 25th November, 1911, as was officially reported, of "apoplexy and heart failure", but as was generally believed of poison. 'Ajaimi remained at large in the neighbourhood of Nasiriyah as an outlaw.

During the interval between Sa'adun Pasha's capture and death the sympathies of the whole Muntafiq tribe (including even his enemies, the Falih family) seem to have veered round in his favour, presumably because he was no longer in the position of an Ottoman official but was obviously out of favour with the Turks.

After the death of Sa'adun Pasha the Muntafiq country was administered from January to November 1912 by a Military Mutasarrif Farid Bey, who was a staunch adherent of the Committee of Union and

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175 Progress and was therefore on friendly terms with 'Ajaimi. 'Ajaimi,
619 as already explained, was on the side of the Committee out of hatred of Saiyid Talib, the betrayer of his father, who was now drifting more and more into opposition to the Committee and was intriguing with 'Ajaimi's cousins and rivals, the members of the Falih family, Mizyad Beg, 'Abdullah Beg and others. In October 1912, when a reactionary movement against the Committee was threatened in Constantinople, a telegram was sent by one of 'Ajaimi's relations to say that 'Ajaimi was ready to march on Constantinople to frustrate any attempt at reaction. In the same month 'Ajaimi attacked and robbed his cousin, Mizyad Beg (probably with the connivance of the Mutasarrif, Farid Pasha), of a very large sum, and came into conflict with Mizyad's brother, 'Abdullah Beg.

The Committee of Union and Progress had been temporarily overthrown in November 1912 and Saiyid Talib was paramount at Basra and in favour with the Wali, who was a creature of Kiamil Pasha. 'Ajaimi was declared an outlaw, owing to his attack on Mizyad; the Falih family was received into full official favour, and the Committee partisan, Farid Pasha, was removed from his post at Nasiriyah. 'Ajaimi, irritated by these events, threatened an attack on Basra in November 1912, and there was a panic in the town, which Saiyid Talib had helped to put in a position of defence. 'Ajaimi was, however, dissuaded from pressing his attack and retired.

In January 1913 the Committee resumed power by a *coup d'état* culminating in the murder of Nazim Pasha and the removal from office of Kiamil. The partisans of the Committee were immediately installed in power in Basra and 'Ajaimi once more found himself on the side of the Turkish officials, while Saiyid Talib was in opposition. Finally in June 1913 Saiyid Talib stood forth at Basra threatening open rebellion against the Turks. The Committee then evolved the scheme that 'Ajaimi's old friend, Farid Pasha, should be sent from Baghdad to be Military Commandant of Basra, and if possible arrest or kill Saiyid Talib, while 'Ajaimi with his tribesmen should help against Basra from the desert. 'Ajaimi's hands were set free by a reconciliation patched up by the officials of Samawah between him and the Dhafir tribe. He advanced against Basra and Saiyid Talib's assassination was expected at any moment. But Saiyid Talib suddenly

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got in the first blow and had Farid Pasha assassinated in open day in 175
'Ashar. 'Ajaimi then retreated, and is said to have complained subse- 619
quently that he had not been properly supported by the Turks.

During the whole of 1913 the Muntafiq country remained in disorder. 'Ajaimi was now apparently officially recognised as Shaikh of the Muntafiq, but was unable to control the tribes. He worked in concert with Ibn Rashid against the Dhafir. In April 1914 the Wali visited Suq ash Shuyukh and saw 'Ajaimi and a new plot seems to have been concocted against Saiyid Talib, who had meanwhile been growing in power at Basra. In May 1914 adherents of 'Ajaimi began to drift into Basra, and Saiyid Talib was once more in danger of assassination, but he took so firm an attitude that the Wali banished 'Ajaimi's adherents from the town. He remained hanging about not far from Zubair until war broke out in November 1914.

The tribes have never acquiesced in their degradation from land-owners to tenants, nor have the Sa'adun been able to enforce to the full the rights they acquired from the Ottoman Government. With the weakening of the central authority since the beginning of the constitutional era in 1908, and the general deterioration in local administration which followed on the Italian and Balkan wars, the official sanction for which the Sa'adun bartered their old tribal prerogative has proved a broken reed. For several years before the British Occupation the tribes had refused to pay rent, and their attitude is one of extreme unwillingness to be drawn back into the state of subserviency which was imposed upon them. At the same time the prestige of the Sa'adun chiefs, combined with the sedulous preaching of the Jihád by pro-Turkish Saiyids, and the yet stronger inducement offered by the immediate rewards of war, whether they took the form of loot or of Turkish subventions, brought the Muntafiq league out against us in 1914. The work of pacification began with the occupation of Nasiriyah and Suq al Shuyukh in July 1915, and in spite of the proximity of hostile influences, made fair progress, but no final settlement of the Muntafiq district can be reached until the rival agrarian claims of Sa'adun and tribesmen have been adjusted.

During the rebellion of 1920-21 against the British, the Muntafiq to their honour remained quiet. With the introduction of the Arab Government under King Faisal I, the Muntafiq at first were loyal

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619 co-operators with Government, both tribesmen and Sa'adun thinking the Government would favour them. Latterly the Sa'adun saw Government turn against them and showed bitter resentment at the change from British to Arab administration.

To-day under the Arab Government of Iraq the Muntafiq tribes are keeping fairly quiet (though they did try an abortive rebellion in the Suq al Shuyukh district in 1935), mainly because the Iraq Government have come out into the open and are pursuing the old policy of the Turks, which was to support the tribesmen against the Sa'adun, their hereditary shaikhs. Whether in the long run they will succeed remains to be seen.

Appendix XVIII

APPENDIX XVIII

"HISTORY OF THE MUNTAFIQ"

Ref. Chapter XLV, p. 553, line 12.

Mr. C. G. Campbell, an authority on the Muntafiq tribes of the Euphrates, 619
has unearthed valuable and interesting evidence to show that the Muntafiq 125
as allies of the Turks were not defeated and forced to submit to the Persians
in 1776 during the three years' occupation of Basra by Shah Kerim Khan
Zend (1776-1779), as stated by the author, but on the contrary themselves
administered a crushing defeat on the Persian Army near Basra in October
1778 at a place called ARJA. A note to the above effect, furnished by
Mr. C. G. Campbell on April 22, 1950 is given below:

The evidence for believing in a Muntafiq victory at ARJA, ARGIA or
YARA (near Basra) known to me is:

- (a) *Arab tribal sources* (which regard the battle as the greatest Muntafiq
victory of all times).
- (b) *Persian History* which admits that Ali Mohomed Khan suffered a
severe defeat and his own death at the hands of the *Arab Tribes*. Ali
Mohomed Khan was the officer left in command at Basra by SADUQ
Khan who was the Persian general who captured Basra. The Persian
version says that after Mohomed's defeat and death, Saduq Khan
returned to Basra and managed to retain the city by adopting a
conciliatory attitude, etc., but abandoned the town immediately on
the death of the ~~then~~ Shah, KERIM KHAN ZEND, in 1779 (13th Safar,
1193 A.H.).
- (c) *Eversfield*, an English traveller and ex-army officer, who visited the
battlefield (Arja) five months after the battle, whilst on his way to
England by the direct route to Aleppo, via Basra and Baghdad, the
Persians being still in occupation of Basra at the time. Quoting from
Eversfield's journal, Mr. C. G. Campbell records the following
entry.

"March 16th, 1779. . . . In the month of October last (1778) a
battle was fought on the field called ARGIA at which place we expected
to halt in 3 hours time, and to learn the reason of the slaughter there
committed by means of the rashness of Ali Mohomed Khan, the
Persian general. . . . At 2 o'clock in the afternoon we reached the
plains of ARGIA, which were as extensive as the eye could carry, but
an arm of the Euphrates makes a half circle of 3 miles inland, on
the upper banks of which, the Muntafiq Arabs and Persians fought,
the former consisting entirely of horse to the number of 8,000, the
Persians of 6,000 horse and the same number of foot, besides 18
large Gallivats. The attack was begun by a violent onset of the
Persians, whose horses once set in a full gallop cannot without

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difficulty be turned, the Arabs, on the contrary, have great management of theirs, and who having thrown their long darts (spears) quickly turned the heads of their horses and galloped away, which the Persians mistaking for flight, pursued with great eagerness, until the Arabs had led them into a swampy ground, when they faced about and attacked the pursuers in their turn. This masterly evolution so disconcerted the Persians that they attempted an immediate retreat, which from the nature of the ground and the ungovernable state of their horses, they so illy effected, that 3 men only (and they much wounded) reached Bussora (Basra) to relate the fate of their unfortunate comrades, all of whom, that day on the field of ARGIA, were cut to pieces by the victorious Arabs. The Gallivats when they perceived the destruction of their army, sailed away down river. . . .

. . . . "We walked over the battlefield, and found it entirely strewn with the bones of the slaughtered Persians. What appears surprising is, that the Arabs lost only twenty men in this engagement. We left this dreadful scene at four o'clock and about five o'clock passed a very handsome town, belonging to the Turks, called ARGIA. . . ."

"(A journal kept on the journey from Bussora to Baghdad; over the little desert to Aleppo, Cyprus, etc., etc., in the year 1779. By a gentleman, late an officer in the service of the Honble. East India Coy. Horsham. Printed by Arthur Lee, and sold by J. & C. Rivington, St. Paul's Churchyard. MDCCLXXXIV)".

Author's Note.—There is no sign to-day of any village or town on the banks of the Euphrates bearing a name resembling ARJA or ARGIA.

APPENDIX XIX

565 Ref.: the community known as "AQAIL" or "AGAIL" (see middle of p. 112, Chapter VI).

The following additional information is given about this interesting class.

"It is not correct to number the AQAIL (or AQAILAT) among the inferior or Non-Sharif tribes of Arabia, for as explained in the note at foot of p. 112, they are not a tribe in any sense of the word. They are a camel-buying community with headquarters in Baghdad, Damascus and Qasim. Any Badawin can become an AQAILI whether he be of an inferior tribe or of a Sharif tribe. Hence among the AQAIL or AGAILAT community as they are called, we find many families of irreproachable Sharif Arab stock, as well

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CHAPTER II

SOCIAL SURVEY

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POPULATION

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THE population of Arabia cannot be estimated with any approach to accuracy. It is usually guessed to be from five to eight millions. The lower of these figures is probably nearest to the truth. If we allow two and a half millions of settled and nomadic folk to the whole Red Sea slope from Midian to Yemen (the last-named, with Asir, holding two-thirds of the total); one and a half to the southern districts and Gulf littoral, inclusive of Hadhramaut (Oman alone has about half a million); half a million to all the Central settled districts together; and one million Central nomads, we are probably over the mark.

B

Nomadic Folk.

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The physical conditions of most parts of the peninsula constrain the majority of inhabitants (where any there are) to a nomadic life; and this, owing to the virtual impossibility of increasing the food-producing area anywhere, must be their lot permanently, unless they emigrate. Emigration, in any case, is constantly taking place, as a result of the high natality which has been attributed in Chapter I to the inhabitants of the Central steppes and oases: and it makes the peninsula a great source of disquiet to all neighbouring lands. The surplus population usually remains for some time within the peninsula, gradually accumulating and tending to form new nomadic groups, which try to establish rights to wells and pasturage already occupied. At last, the action of some tribe or tribes, or sheer want, forces them out, with all their predatory habits and defective experience of settled life, towards the borders of Egypt, Syria, or Mesopotamia.

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In historic times, for example, the settlement of the NW. African littoral by Arabs is known to have been due to a forcible expulsion of surplus population from the peninsula, carried out by certain of the stronger tribes. The overflow of the Shammar into Mesopotamia and of the Anazah tribes into the Hamād are also instances in point. As for earlier times, the Semitic invasions of Babylonia, the

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Canaanite invasion of Syria, the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, and the Hebrew invasion of Palestine are also to be explained by similar antecedent events in Arabia. 167 175 •

The distribution, grouping, character, and resources of the several tribes are the subject of a subsequent chapter (III); and their relation to particular localities will be stated in the special chapters on the different provinces. 000

It would be beyond the scope of this Handbook to give a detailed description of Bedouin society; and mere generalities about it are of little service. It is perhaps, however, worth while to say something about those features and customs of Bedouin life which most directly affect the reception and entertainment of strangers, and should, therefore, be known before contact. Dictated by similar necessities, these are more or less common to all tribesmen. For all the rest, study of Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* cannot be too strongly recommended. Pretty well everything that needs to be known about Bedouin life can be found there by a patient reader.

Arabia is 'a land of ancient violence'. For this state of things geographical conditions are largely responsible. Only in very few, rare, and narrow districts is it possible to derive from the soil, not a superfluity, entailing wealth, leisure, and consequent civilization, but anything better than hand-to-mouth existence in full sight of starvation. Agriculture is impossible in three-quarters of the total area, and man must live on peripatetic food pastured on such thin and evanescent vegetation that a single family has to keep on the move in order to live. Water again, the prime condition of existence, is to be found for the most part only very occasionally in deep wells, or rain-pools, and this under a subtropical sun. Scanty sources have to be guarded with the most jealous exclusiveness. The regions over which these conditions prevail usually offer few or none of those natural features which serve elsewhere to protect or conceal; and in their vast extent and distribution they impinge so generally on the few fertile districts, or so often encircle these, that hardly any part of Arabia is altogether unaffected by the inevitable social features of life on steppe and desert. 181 511

The most obvious of these features is suspicion. Every man is treated as a potential enemy, till he shows evidence to the contrary. He is kept at a distance until his person or his authority can be recognized. Therefore, in approaching Bedouins, it is as prudent to go slow and give them time as in approaching a sentry in a war-area. Disregard of this advice will result in fight or flight, according to circumstances. While all Bedouins are instinctively suspicious of, and hostile to, the unknown, various 157 609